

10. WESTERNMOST RECORD OF THE GREAT SLATY WOODPECKER
MULLERIPICUS PULVERULENTUS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

This fine and distinctive woodpecker is stated to be found in the Himalayan foothills from Kumaon c. 79° E through Nepal to Sikkim and Bhutan (p. 206, Vol. 4 of HANDBOOK). In 1950 I had the good fortune of staying for a considerable time in Simla and I have done the hills around that hill station more thoroughly than possibly any one else could hope to. The northern slopes of Jakho Hill (c. 77°E) above the circular cart road is covered with very dense stands of *Rhododendron arboreum*, and there was a lot of undergrowth. Quietly walking through this forest, pausing every now and then to locate birds busy with their various activities, I noticed a large woodpecker alighting at the base of a tree. The bird was not more than fifteen feet from where I stood and seemed totally oblivious of my presence. I was able to watch it through my field glasses for more than half an hour! It first hunted around

the tree trunk and then slipped down onto the ground and began to feed on ants giving me excellent views of it from all sides as it busily and with great concentration fed on the insects. What struck me was the large size, the distinctive slaty grey colour and crimson moustache stripes which later sexed my bird as a male. All the while that the bird performed for my benefit, it remained silent. Finally he flew down the mountain and I went my quiet way up. So clear and distinctive this view had been that even today I can visualise the bird and the reason why I did not write earlier about its westward range extension was the fact that I identified my bird from the same illustrations with Shivraj Kumar and it never occurred to me that the bird was not found all along the Himalayas.

I saw the bird in June and at an altitude a little above 7,000'.

LAVKUMAR J. KHACHER

C/O. WORLD WILDLIFE FUND,
HORNBILL HOUSE,
SHAHID BHAGAT SINGH ROAD,
BOMBAY 400 023,
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11. THE GREYHEADED MYNA NESTING IN RESIDENTIAL
BUILDINGS

In 1970, when studying breeding biology of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Linnaeus for my M.Sc. dissertation, I saw five pairs of the Greyheaded Myna *Sturnus malabaricus* (Gmelin) building their nests inside ventilator holes of a residential hostel of the University of Dacca, situated in the heart of Dacca city (Bangladesh). The nests of the Greyheaded Myna were found only in the ground floor

holes of the three storied structure. There were 53 such holes, and of these, 5 were occupied by the Greyheaded Myna, one by the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis tristis* (Linnaeus) and the remaining ones by the House Sparrow. The holes were located at a height of about 5 metres (15 ft). In March 1970, the Greyheaded Mynas sometimes fought with the House Sparrows over holes which were already under